

Item Development

Beginning in 2016, we examined all of the psychological principles that were related to entrepreneurial performance. This list contained 76 different principles derived from various entrepreneurship and psychological literatures. Some of the 76 were found in literatures not intimately involved either with psychological research or with entrepreneurship research, so there were overlaps and occasional instances of imprecision. For example, “need for achievement” is obviously the same as “achievement motivation,” but to remain true to the original source both were listed.

Eliminating overlap reduced this group to 37 that were conceptually distinct from one another. The next step was to create a set of 116 items representing the constructs. Items were (a) taken from published scales previously used with entrepreneurs, or (b) taken from published scales related to entrepreneurship that had as of yet not been tested on entrepreneur samples, (c) adapted single illustrative items representing unpublished whole scales (to which we added), and (d) wrote items ourselves where there were none that existed.

Through a pilot study ($n = 400$) the total was reduced to 72 items using the combined results of Principal Components Analysis and Unweighted Least Squares factor analysis (both using SPSS), with the dimensions verified through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (using LISREL). These 72 items were subsequently used in two national studies, each involving a representative sample of participants (total $n = 4,435$). Some of the items had also previously been part of the US Panel Studies of Entrepreneurial Dynamics (PSED, total $n = 2,475$). The nine foundational dimensions identified through this work are shown below. Most dimensions involved different item sets for women and men, so the dimensions for women used a total of 38 of the 72 items, whereas the dimensions for men used a (not completely overlapping) total of 48 of the 72 items. The table also shows the internal consistency level (measured by Cronbach’s α) and a sample item for each dimension. All nine dimensions distinguish entrepreneurs from people who are not entrepreneurs. These are the nine dimensions represented in the MCET.

Dimension	Sample Item	Females		Males	
		Items	CA	Items	CA
Confidence	I feel confident about my abilities	3	.803	5	.825
Diligence	I finish whatever I begin	4	.779	7	.825
Ent. Desire	I have seriously thought about starting my own business	4	.875	4	.863
Innovation	I would rather innovate than continue to do the same old thing	6	.793	6	.736
Leadership	Most people think I am a strong leader	4	.698	4	.591
Motives	I want to build great wealth or a very high income	3	.828	4	.827
Permanence	People have a certain amount of intelligence and they really can’t do much to change it	6	.779	6	.765
Resilience	Life’s challenges are opportunities for personal growth	6	.792	7	.821
Self-control	I want to control my own destiny	2	.708	5	.828